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Exclusive: NIH freezes all research grants to Columbia University

Amid negotiations with Trump, the university could risk losing nearly $700 million

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So far unable to satisfy the demands of President Donald Trump's administration, Columbia University stands to lose even more of its funding from the National Institutes of Health.   TAIDGH BARRON/ZUMA

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After Columbia's 'nightmare,' dozens more universities brace for Trump NIH cuts

BY JOCELYN KAISER • NEWS • 18 MAR 2025

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Weeks after President Donald Trump's administration ordered the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) to pull $250 million in biomedical research grants to Columbia University, the agency is freezing all remaining grant money owed to the university until further notice, according to internal documents seen by *Science*.

Last month, White House began to pressure Columbia over its handling of anti-Israel protests and other allegations of antisemitism at the university, saying it was killing $400 million in federal grants to the school, including the NIH money. [NIH terminated approximately 400 grants to Columbia on 12 March and ordered their researchers to stop work on them](#).

Yesterday, NIH raised the stakes: At the behest of its parent agency, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), NIH will not only block new funding for the university, but also stop paying investigators working on all existing NIH projects. Although these researchers will not be ordered to stop work, they will need prior approval from NIH to draw from existing disbursements, according to an NIH source. At this time, Columbia has not received notice from NIH about additional cancellations. "The University remains in active dialogue with the Federal Government to restore its critical research funding," the school said in a statement.

In an 8 April email seen by *Science*, NIH's Office of Policy for Extramural Research Administration Director Michelle Bulls told grant administrators that HHS had initially ordered NIH to terminate the first "wave" of grants to Columbia and hold others while the school negotiated with the government. Now, she said, no NIH awards can be made to Columbia until the restriction is lifted. In 2024, Columbia received about $690 million in grant funding from NIH.

It's not yet clear whether other federal science agencies are also killing additional Columbia grants, but NIH's latest action comes as the university has acquiesced to some administration demands while still negotiating on others. The White House also announced yesterday it was freezing $1 billion in federal funding at Cornell University and $750 million at Northwestern University.

The Trump administration has released [a list of 60 universities](#) it claims have not done enough to quell "antisemitic" speech amid student protests against Israel's campaign in Gaza. The administration also accuses the universities of racism through their diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, although it has not yet brought any formal civil rights actions against the schools.

Brown University also had its NIH grants frozen, and the agency is reviewing its funding to Harvard University as part of a broader Trump administration review of some $9 billion in federal funding to the Massachusetts school.

Update, 10 April, 5:10 p.m.: This story has been updated with a response from Columbia.

Update, 11 April, 1:50 p.m.: This story originally said Princeton had NIH grants frozen but it's grants from other federal agencies that were halted. Princeton says it has no knowledge of any frozen NIH grants.

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